Home

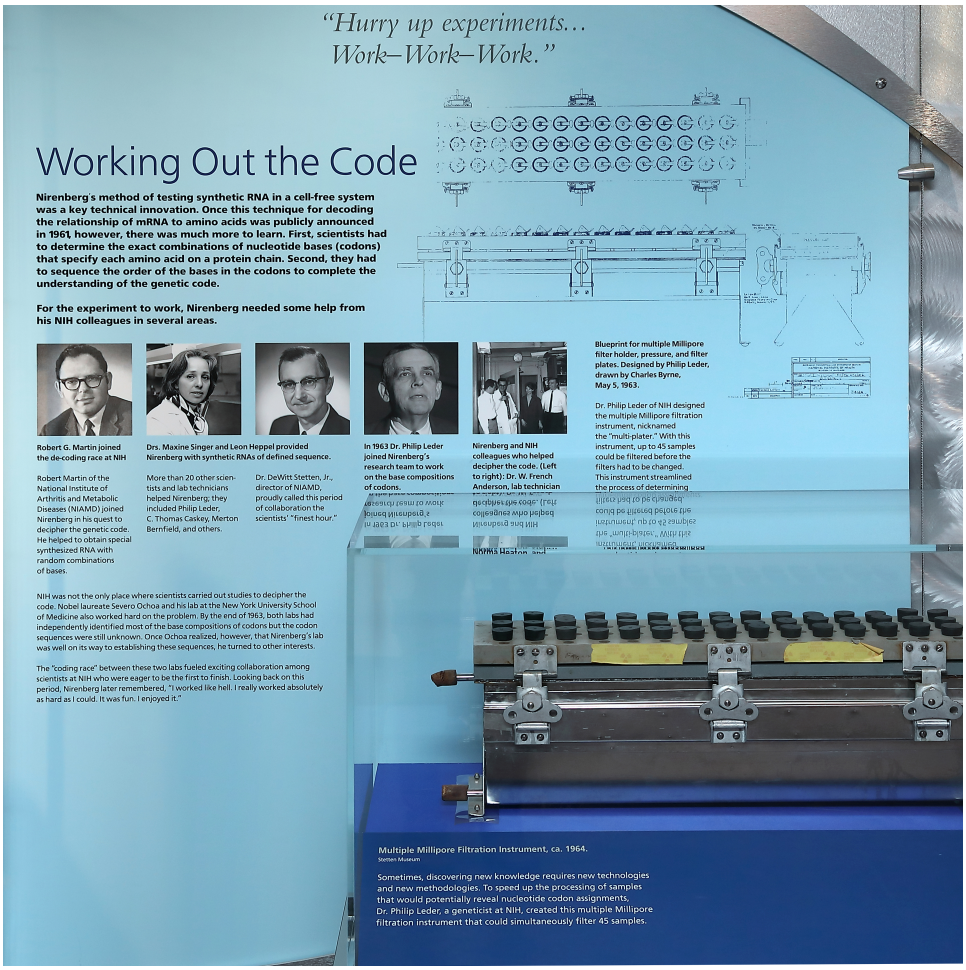
A Note About Visiting Us

Our exhibits are spread out in several buildings across the NIH campus. At this point in time, the NIH campus is closed to visitors except for those who are participating in clinical protocols or who have other business on campus. We look forward to welcoming visitors again in the near future.

Highlights

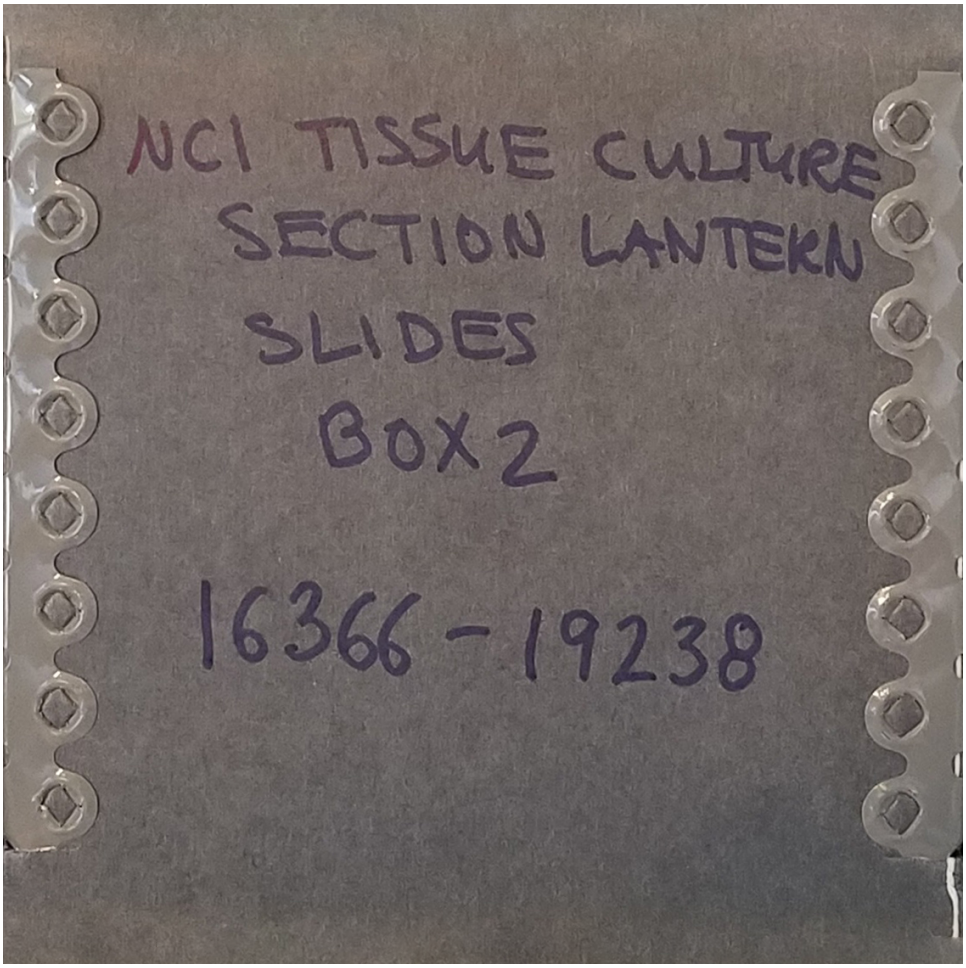
A Short History of the NIH

How NIH grew from a one-room laboratory to become the largest biomedical research agency in the world.

- 

Exhibits

The DeWitt Stetten Jr. Museum of Medical Research, established in 1986, preserves and interprets the material culture of the scientific work of the NIH. In conjunction with the broader Office of NIH History, the Stetten Museum collects biomedical research instruments, photographs, videos, journals, oral histories, and objects related to the general history of the NIH, including architectural artifacts, artwork, and clothing.

- 

Collections

The Office of NIH History and Stetten Museum holds many collections: objects, images, and documents, and books. We have over 3,100 objects and thousands of photographs related to NIH history. There are many ways to search our collections.

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Archives

The Office of NIH History and Stetten Museum was established to increase historical understanding of the National Institutes of Health and biomedical science among NIH staff, scholars, and the general public. The Office serves as a source of information for NIH history by maintaining a subject and biographical ready-reference collection.

Canyon Creek Schoolhouse Laboratory 100th Anniversary

In September 1921, state and federal scientists rented a schoolhouse in Montana to set up a laboratory. They worked there only seven years, but what they did made history: created a vaccine for a highly fatal disease; added to our knowledge of diseases carried by ticks; and established the forerunner of the Rocky Mountain Laboratories.

Call for Stories: Behind the Mask

COVID-19 has impacted the NIH community in many ways—from researching and providing information about the disease, developing therapeutics and vaccines, caring for patients in the Clinical Center, and re-configuring how we perform our jobs. The Office of NIH History and Stetten Museum seeks reflections, documents, photographs, and objects about how those at NIH have experienced the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Kim Pelis Named ONHM Director

Dr. Pelis has worked at the NIH for more than 15 years, primarily in the Office of the Director, where she was lead speech writer on the NIH Director's Presentations Team and an editor for the NIH Director's Blog. Kim joins the ONHM with experience in both academic and public history. She earned her Ph.D. in the history of medicine from Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Prior to coming to the NIH, Kim was an assistant professor of medical history at the Uniformed Services University, across the street from the NIH, from 1998 to 2005.

Observing Native American Heritage Month

This Native American Heritage Month, we want to recognize the history of cooperation and collaboration between NIH and Tribal Nations. On his final day as NIH director – October 31, 2008 – Dr. Elias Zerhouni attended a meeting of the Director's Council of Public Representatives (COPR). Formed in 1998 by former NIH Director Harold Varmus, COPR was composed of members of the public who gave insight on opportunities for public participation and outreach at NIH. During this meeting, committee member Dr. Cynthia Lindquist, Spirit Lake Dakota Nation member and president of Cankdeska Cikana Community College, gifted a star quilt to Dr. Zerhouni. She invited Lora M. Church, a Navajo committee member from the Bitterwater and Black Streak Wood Clan, to sing a song of blessing as Zerhouni stepped down.

From left to right: Lora M. Church, Dr. Cynthia Lindquist, Dr. Elias Zerhouni, and Dr. Raynard Kington, acting director following Zerhouni.

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